

Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6328

INFO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T RABAT 4742

EXDIS (HANDLE AS NODIS)

JERUSALEM FOR ASST SECY SAUNDERS

EO 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: MASS US MO

SUBJECT: MOROCCAN USE OF AMERICAN-ORIGIN ARMS

REF A. STATE 194182; B. STATE 196718

1. ROYAL COUNSELOR REDA GUEDIRA RECEIVED ME IN CASABLANCA
FRIIDAY AFTERNOON, AUGUST 4, AFTER HIS RETURN FROM PARIS
THE PREVIOUS EVENING. DURING A 40MINUTE DISCUSSION ON
A NUMBER OF TOPICS (SEE SEPTELS) GUEDIRA WAS FRIENDLY AND
ATTENTIVE THRUHOUT ALTHOUGH CLEARLY TROUBLED BY OUR
JURIDICAL POSITION ON THE SAHARA DESPITE THE PROSPECT OF
SOLVING THE PROBLEM OF THE USE OF US ARMS.

2. THANKING GUEDIRA FOR SEEING ME SO PROMPTLY AND
RECALLING ASST SECY SAUNDERS' VISIT AND THE
SECRETARY'S MESSAGE TO THE KING OF JULY 25, I CARRIED OUT
INSTRUCTIONS SET FORTH IN STATE 194182. I NOTED THAT A
PHONE CALL ON AUGUST 3 FROM MOROCCAN AMBASSADOR BENGELLOUN
HAD GIVEN AFN DIRECTOR BISHOP THE OPPORTUNITY TO
RAISE THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF F-5S IN THE SAHARA,
ADDING THAT BENGELLOUN HAD SPECULATED A POSSIBLE LACK

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OF INTERNAL GOM COORDINATION. ALTHOUGH GUEDIRA DID
NOT APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN EXPECTING MY INSTRUCTIONS,
HE QUICKLY TOOK THE POINT. HE STATED THAT THE
GOM WANTS TO MOVE FORWARD ON THE PROBLEMS IN OUR
MILITARY ASSISTANCE RELATIONSHIP AND UNDERTOOK TO
LOOK INTO THE F-5 QUESTION SOONEST.

3. DURING THE DISCUSSION IT BECAME APPARENT THAT THE UNDERSTANDABLY PREOCCUPIED GUEDIRA WAS HAZY ON THE DETAILS OF THE TALKS DURING THE SAUNDERS' VISIT OF US RECEPTIVITY TO JOINT MAURITANIAN-MOROCCAN REQUESTS TO PERMIT USE OF US-ORIGIN EQUIPMENT BY THE MOROCCANS FOR THE DEFENSE OF MAURITANIA. GUEDIRA MADE NOTES AND GAVE NO CONCERN AT ANY POTENTIAL DIFFICULTY IN GETTING NOUAKCHOTT ON BOARD.

4. WHEN I RAISED POINT 3 OF INSTRUCTIONS, GUEDIRA INTERJECTED: "I CAN TELL YOU OFFICIALLY RIGHT NOW IT IS OV-10S AND NOT COBRAS WHICH ARE OF GREATEST NEEDS." WHEN I NOTED THAT THE KING HAD NOT MENTIONED THE OV-10S TO SAUNDERS AND HAD CLEARLY INDICATED HIS PRIORITY DESIRE TO PROCEED WITH THE PURCHASE OF COBRAS FOR USE ALONG THE MOROCCAN/ALGERIAN BORDER NORTH OF THE SAHARA, GUEDIRA REITERATED THAT HASSAN WISHES TO PUT THE COBRA REQUEST ASIDE FOR NOW AS HE PLANS TO PURCHASE OTHER AMERICAN-MADE HELICOPTERS. (HE MADE NO MENTION OF FRENCH GAZELLE HELICOPTERS.) I TOLD GUEDIRA THAT IF GOM WISHED TO REACTIVATE OV-10 REQUEST, WE WOULD NEED ASSURANCES A LA F-5 THAT THESE PLANES WOULD NOT BE USED IN THE SAHARA, AS THIS QUESTION WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE RAISED BY THE CONGRESS. GUEDIRA RECOGNIZED NECESSITY FOR SUCH ASSURANCES, ASSUMED THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE FOR USE IN THE SAHARA, SECRET

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BUT SAID HE WOULD BE BACK IN TOUCH WITH ME ON THE SUBJECT.

5. GUEDIRA WILL BE LOOKING INTO THE STATUS OF THE MOROCCAN REQUEST FOR OV-10S -- NEITHER OF US COULD RECALL THE DETAILS OF THE FORMAL MOROCCAN REQUEST OF NOVEMBER 12 FOR LOA (RABAT 6254) -- AND INTO THE QUESTION OF ASSURANCES. AS HE WILL BE BACK TO ME ON THIS SUBJECT, I RECOMMEND WE AWAIT ANY CLARIFICATION BEFORE ACCEPTING DEFINITELY THIS RATHER STARTLING REVERSAL OF THE PRIORITIES STATED SO RECENTLY TO SAUNDERS BY HASSAN (RABAT 4443). THERE IS AMPLE ROOM AND PRECEDENT FOR CONFUSION. ANDERSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY EQUIPMENT, ARMS, MEETINGS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, FOREIGN ASSISTANCE, CAT-B
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978RABAT04742
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: P840139-2402
Format: TEL
From: RABAT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780894/aaaadasd.tel
Line Count: 108
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 617b1d68-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS, EXDIS
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS, EXDIS
Reference: 78 STATE 194182, 78 STATE 196718
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1825699
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MOROCCAN USE OF AMERICAN-ORIGIN ARMS
TAGS: MASS, US, MO, (GUEDIRA, REDA)
To: STATE JERUSALEM MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/617b1d68-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014